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SOME TYPES OF AMERICAN FOLK-SONG.¹

BY JOHN A. LOMAX.

A BALLAD has been defined by Professor Kittredge as a story told in song, or a song that tells a story. This general definition of a ballad has been made more specific by various limitations. For instance, it is said that a genuine ballad has no one author; that, instead, some community or some group of people is its author. It is therefore the expression of no one mind: it is the product of the folk. Furthermore, the ballad has no date. No one knows just when the most treasured of the English and Scottish ballads were composed. For generations before Percy made his first collection of them—and no one knows just how many generations—they were handed down by word of mouth, as is the Masonic Ritual. A ballad, finally, is impersonal in tone; that is, it is the expression of no individual opinion. It might have been written by any one. A ballad, then, is a story in song, written no one knows when, no one knows where, no one knows by whom, and perhaps, some may think, no one knows "for why." Notwithstanding, as the spontaneous poetic expression of the primitive emotions of a people, ballads always have had and always will have the power to move mankind.

Have we any American ballads? Let us frankly confess, that, according to the definitions of the best critics of the ballad, we have none at all. There has, however, sprung up in America a considerable body of folk-song, called by courtesy "ballads," which in their authorship, in the social conditions under which they were produced, in the spirit that gives them life, resemble the genuine ballads sung by our English and Scottish grandmothers long before there was an American people. We recognize and love the new ballad, just as we love the old, because the real ballad, perhaps as much as any other form of expression, appeals to our deepest, most intimate, and most elemental

¹ Address of the retiring President, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, held in New York, N.Y., December, 1913.

associations. Our primitive instincts yet influence us. You and I, living in the heyday of civilization under the conventions of cultured people, are yet, after all, not so far removed from a time and from a folk that spoke out their emotions simply and directly. A ballad is such a fresh, direct, and simple expression, — not of an individual, but of a people, — upon a subject that has a common interest and a common appeal, because of its common association to all of that people; and the emotions it expresses are the abiding experiences of the human heart. I contend that American ballads that have caught the spirit of the old ballads, however they may be lacking in impersonality, in form and in finish do exist and are being made to-day.

I hope you will pardon me for taking this occasion to tell you that I have long cherished an earnest purpose — a purpose which has been kindly and earnestly encouraged by some of my friends in the English Faculty at Harvard — to collect for the use of students a large body of this, to me, very interesting form of American literature. I am glad, furthermore, to report to this Society that a number of other individuals in different parts of the United States are at work on the same project; and while all of us combined have not more than well begun the enterprise, in my judgment another decade will see the greater portion of this material put into available shape for use in the libraries of all the universities that care for it. Already I have for presentation to Harvard University, which first made it possible for me to enter upon the work of collecting, and for my own university (the University of Texas), more than one thousand typewritten sheets of almost that number of American folk-songs. Much of this material, when compared with existing collections, will doubtless be found worthless or already in print. A considerable portion of it, however, I believe to be for the first time reduced to writing.

More than half of my collection has been taken down from oral recitation; and practically all of the songs in the collection, even if they have existed heretofore in the printed page, have for years been transmitted orally from one person to another in the localities where the songs were found. In other words, much of what I present has been for some time the property of the folk, if I may use a technical term, transmitted orally to me or to some one acting for me. If one says the folk did not create any or all of these songs, then I reply, the folk adopted them, set them to tunes, and yet transmit them through the voice and not by means of the written page. A further fact, particularly noteworthy to those interested in the ballad, is that the prevailing types of songs thus transmitted embody in some particulars the characteristics of the Scottish and English ballads.

I shall mention, even if I do not have time to discuss and illustrate them, seven types of the so-called "American ballads" that have come

into my net since I began this work five or six years ago, — the ballads of the miner, particularly of the days of '49; the ballads of lumbermen; the ballads of the inland sailor, dealing principally with life on the Great Lakes; the ballads of the soldier; the ballads of the railroader; the ballads of the negro; and the ballads of the cowboy. Another type, of which I should like to give examples, includes the songs of the down-and-out classes, — the outcast girl, the dope fiend, the convict, the jail-bird, and the tramp.

The tales of adventure, of love, of pathos, of tragedy, in these different types of ballads, make them all similar in content. The line of cleavage between the types is therefore not made on subject-matter, except in so far as this subject-matter is descriptive of the community life among the particular types. The songs assigned definitely to the cowboy, to the gold-digger, to the canal-boatman, etc., are those popular and current among these classes of people, and, so far as one is able to judge, originating with them. The ideal ballad of each type, of course, contains descriptive matter that affords internal evidence that it belongs to that particular type. One general characteristic possessed by these seven type-examples of the ballads found in America I wish to call to your especial attention. The life of every calling represented was spent in the open, and, furthermore, the occupation of each calling demanded supreme physical endeavor. The songs were made by men in most cases away from home and far removed from the restraining influences of polite society. They were created by men of vigorous action for an audience of men around the camp-fire, in the forecandle, in the cotton-fields, about the bivouacs of the soldier, during a storm at night when the cattle were restless and milling. Should one be surprised, then, that the verse is rough in construction, often coarse in conception, and that its humor is robust and Rabelaisian? Many of the songs, as you can well imagine, are totally unfit for public reading. I believe the suggestion I have made in the foregoing sentences, together with the fact that our American ballads have not existed long enough to receive the polish they would get by repetition through two or three centuries, — I repeat, I believe these two facts offer partial explanation of the great difference between the subject-matter and the treatment of American ballads when compared with the English and Scottish ballads.

Frankly, my own interest in American ballads is largely because they are human documents that reveal the mode of thinking, the character of life, and the point of view, of the vigorous, red-blooded, restless Americans, who could no more live contented shut in by four walls than could Beowulf and his clan, who sailed the seas around the coasts of Norway and Sweden.

Who make and preserve these songs? I do not know, except in a

very few instances, the name of any author. Surely they are not the "spinsters and knitters in the sun;" rather they are the victims of *Wanderlust*, the rovers, who find solace in the wide, silent places of the earth. They are well described in a song found among the cowboys and miners of Arizona, said to be sung to the tune of "Little Joe the Wrangler."

I've beat my way wherever any winds have blown;
I've bummed along from Portland down to San Antone,
From Sandy Hook to Frisco over gulch and hill,
For, once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still.

I settles down quite frequent; and I says, says I,
"I'll never wander further till I comes to die."
But the wind it sorta chuckles, "Why o' course you will,"
An', sure enough, I does it, 'cause I can't keep still.

I've seed a lot of places where I'd like to stay,
But I gets a-feelin' restless an' I'm on my way;
I was never meant for settin' on my own door sill,
An', once you get the habit, why, you can't keep still.

I've been in rich men's houses and I've been in jail,
But when it's time for leavin' I jes hits the trail;
I'm a human bird of passage, and the song I trill
Is, "Once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still."

The sun is sorta coaxin' an' the road is clear,
An' the wind is singin' ballads that I got to hear;
It ain't no use to argue when you feel the thrill,
For, once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still.

These folk-songs originate and are yet current, as I have said, wherever people live isolated lives, — isolated lives under conditions more or less primitive; and particularly do such songs come from those people whose mode of living makes necessary extreme physical endeavor. From the mining-camps of California; from the lumber-camps of Maine and Michigan; from the railroad-camps of the far West and Northwest; from the forecastle of every ship that sailed the sea; from the freight-boats of the Great Lakes, and the tow-paths of the Erie Canal; from the bivouacs of the soldiers in the Civil War; from the big cotton-plantations of the river-bottoms of the South; and from the cowboys who, during the past fifty years, ran the cattle-ranches of the Southwest, — from all these sources have come to us songs vitalizing and vivifying the community life of these groups of men. Some of the songs I read are familiar to a portion, at least, of this audience; some I believe are for the first time brought together in the form I give them. My choice has been determined not so much by a desire to prove the correctness of the comments of this part of my paper as

to present something that I trust will illustrate fairly a few of the types of American folk-songs.

Several years ago a correspondent of mine in Idaho sent me a song called "Joe Bowers," which he said he had heard sung over and over again by a thousand miners after a hard day's work, as they loitered about the mouth of a mine before separating for the night. Four years ago I read this ballad in Ithaca at a smoker of the Modern Language Association. Later in the evening a member of this Association came to me and said that he had seen the same song written on the walls of an old tavern not many miles from Ithaca. Since that time I have discovered that "Joe Bowers" was one of the popular songs among the Confederate soldiers of the Civil War. I have run upon men who knew it in Wyoming, in California, in Arizona, in Oklahoma, and in other States. Its history is in dispute, and there has been a voluminous newspaper controversy in Missouri concerning its authorship. Let me add that there is a Pike County, Missouri, and in my judgment there was a real Joe Bowers who suffered some such fate as is described in the song.

JOE BOWERS.

My name is Joe Bowers,
I have a brother Ike,
I came here from Missouri,
Yes, all the way from Pike.
I'll tell you why I left there
And how I came to roam,
And leave my poor old mammy,
So far away from home.

I used to love a gal there,
Her name was Sallie Black,
I asked her for to marry me,
She said it was a whack.
She says to me, "Joe Bowers,
Before you hitch for life,
You ought to have a little home
To keep your little wife."

Says I, "My dearest Sallie,
O Sallie! for your sake
I'll go to California,
And try to raise a stake."
Says she to me, "Joe Bowers,
You are the chap to win,
Give me a kiss to seal the bargain,"
And I throwed a dozen in.

I'll never forget my feelings
When I bid adieu to all.

Sal, she cotched me round the neck
And I began to bawl.
When I begun, they all commenced;
You never heard the like,
How they all took on and cried
That day I left old Pike.

When I got to this here country
I hadn't nary a red,
I had such wolfish feelings
I wished myself most dead.
At last I went to mining,
Put in my biggest licks,
Came down upon the bowlders
Just like a thousand bricks.

I worked both late and early
In rain and sun and snow,
But I was working for my Sallie,
So 'twas all the same to Joe.
I made a very lucky strike,
As the gold itself did tell,
For I was working for my Sallie,
The girl I loved so well.

But one day I got a letter
From my dear brother Ike;
It came from old Missouri,
Yes, all the way from Pike.
It told me the goldarndest news
That ever you did hear.
My heart it is a-bustin',
So please excuse this tear.

I'll tell you what it was, boys,
You'll bust your sides, I know;
For when I read that letter,
You ought to seen poor Joe.
My knees gave way beneath me,
And I pulled out half my hair;
And if you ever tell this now,
You bet you'll hear me swear.

It said my Sallie was fickle,
Her love for me had fled,
That she had married a cowboy
Whose hair was awful red.
It told me more than that,
It's enough to make me swear, —
It said that Sallie had a baby,
And the baby had red hair.

Now I've told you all that I can tell
About this sad affair, —
'Bout Sallie marrying the cowboy
And the baby had red hair.
But whether it was a boy or girl
The letter never said,
It only said its cussed hair
Was inclined to be red.

From such social conditions as are hinted at in this song, there sprang up another song, doubtless more widely popular. It, too, has an interesting story, which I will not go into here.

THE DAYS OF FORTY-NINE.

We are gazing now on old Tom Moore,
A relic of bygone days;
'Tis a bummer, too, they call me now,
But what cares I for praise?
It's oft, says I, for the days gone by,
It's oft do I repine
For the days of old when we dug out the gold
In those days of Forty-Nine.

My comrades they all loved me well,
The jolly, saucy crew;
A few hard cases, I will admit,
Though they were brave and true.
Whatever the pinch, they ne'er would flinch,
They never would fret nor whine;
Like good old bricks they stood the kicks
In the days of Forty-Nine.

There's old "Aunt Jess," that hard old cuss,
Who never would repent;
He never missed a single meal,
Nor never paid a cent.
But old "Aunt Jess," like all the rest,
At death he did resign,
And in his bloom went up the flume
In the days of Forty-Nine.

There is Ragshag Jim, the roaring man,
Who could out-roar a buffalo, you bet;
He roared all day and he roared all night,
And I guess he is roaring yet.
One night Jim fell in a prospect hole, —
It was a roaring bad design, —
And in that hole Jim roared out his soul
In the days of Forty-Nine.

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There is Wylie Bill, the funny man,
Who was full of funny tricks;
And when he was in a poker game
He was always hard as bricks.
He would ante you at stud, he would play you at draw,
He'd go you a hateful blind, —
In a struggle with death Bill lost his breath
In the days of Forty-Nine.

There was New York Jake, the butcher boy,
Who was fond of getting tight;
And every time he got on a spree
He was spoiling for a fight.
One night Jake rampaged against a knife
In the hands of old Bob Sine,
And over Jake they held a wake
In the days of Forty-Nine.

There was Monte Pete, I'll never forget
The luck he always had;
He would deal for you both day and night
Or as long as he had a scad.
It was a pistol-shot that lay Pete out,
It was his last resign,
And it caught Pete dead shore in the door
In the days of Forty-Nine.

Of all the comrades that I've had
There's none that's left to boast,
And I am left alone in my misery,
Like some poor wandering ghost.
And as I pass from town to town,
They call me the rambling sign,
Since the days of old and the days of gold
And the days of Forty-Nine.

As a type of the lumberman's shanty, I shall read "Silver Jack," which was sent to me by Professor Edwin F. Gay, Dean of the Graduate School of Business Administration of Harvard University. He says that he got it from a lumber-camp in northern Michigan, and that it is probably not an original lumber-jack ballad. It is, however, very popular among lumbermen. And Silver Jack, the hero of the poem, was a real person who lived near Saginaw, Mich., and was well known among the camp and lumbermen as a hard case. About the same time that Professor Gay sent me this song, I received practically the identical song from Bay City, Tex. Thus one copy has come to me from lumbermen near Canada, and another from the canal-diggers close to the line of Old Mexico. As you will see, this particular ballad has a suspicious resemblance to newspaper verse.

SILVER JACK.

I was on the Drive in eighty,
Working under Silver Jack,
Which the same was now in Jackson
And ain't soon expected back.
And there was a fellow 'mongst us
By the name of Robert Waite
Kind of cute and smart and tonguey,
Guess he was a graduate.

He could talk on any subject,
From the Bible down to Hoyle,
And his words flowed out so easy,
Just as smooth and slick as oil.
He was what they call a sceptic,
And he loved to sit and weave
Hifalutin words together
Telling what he didn't believe.

One day we all were sittin' round
Waiting for a flood, smoking Nigger-head tobacco,
And hearing Bob expound.
Hell, he said, was all a humbug,
And he made it plain as day
That the Bible was a fable;
And we 'lowed it looked that way.
Miracles and such like
Were too rank for him to stand;
And as for him they called the Savior,
He was just a common man.

"You're a liar!" some one shouted,
"And you've got to take it back."
Then everybody started —
'Twas the words of Silver Jack.
And he cracked his fists together
And he stacked his duds and cried,
"Twas in that thar religion
That my mother lived and died;
And though I haven't always
Used the Lord exactly right,
Yet when I hear a chump abuse him
He must eat his words or fight."

Now, this Bob he weren't no coward,
And he answered bold and free,
"Stack your duds and cut your capers,
For there ain't no flies on me."
And they fit for forty minutes,
And the crowd would whoop and cheer
When Jack spit up a tooth or two,
Or when Bobby lost an ear.

But at last Jack got him under
 And he slugged him onct or twist,
 And straightway Bob admitted
 The divinity of Christ.
 But Jack kept reasoning with him
 Till the poor cuss gave a yell,
 And 'lowed he'd been mistaken
 In his views concerning hell.

Then the fierce encounter ended
 And they riz up from the ground,
 And some one brought a bottle out
 And kindly passed it round.
 And we drank to Bob's religion
 In a cheerful sort o'way,
 But the spread of infidelity
 Was checked in camp that day.

Among the most spirited songs in my collection are some that come from the Great Lakes. A fragment begins, —

It was the steamer Reynolds that sailed the breezy sea;
 And she sailed from old Buffalo, and the wind was blowed a-lea.
 Oh, the skipper was an Irishman, as you may understand,
 And every port the skipper struck he was sure to rush the can.
 Oh, the mate he was a rusher, and so was the captain too,
 And he paid the deck . . .

And then the song suddenly stops, because the singer became too drunk to go further. Here is another fragment: —

We left Duluth bout half-past four,
 A-loaded down with the red iron ore;
 The wind was high and the stream was low,
 And forty-two was the number of the tow.

Another excellent example swings off, —

Come, all you jolly sailor boys that love to hear a song,
 Attention pay to what I say, I'll not detain you long.
 In Milwaukee last October I chanced to get a sight
 On the timber schooner "Bigelow," belonging to Detroit.

Chorus.

So watch her, catch her, jump up in a juba-ju!
 Give her the sheet and let her rip, we're the boys can put her through.
 You'd ought to have seen her howling, the wind a-blowing free,
 On our passage down to Buffalo from Milwaukee.

The wind came up that night, my boys, and blew both stout and strong;
 And down through Lake Michigan the "Bigelow" ploughed along,
 While far before her foaming bows, dashing waves she'd fling
 With every stitch of canvas set, she's sailing wing and wing.

We passed "Skillagles" and "Wable-Shanks" at the entrance of the Straits;

We might have passed the fleet ahead, if they'd hove to and wait;
But we swept them all before us, the neatest ever you saw,
Clear out into Lake Huron from the Straits of Mackinaw.

From Thunder Bay Island to Sable Point we held her full and by,
We held her to the breeze, boys, as close as she could lie.
The captain ordered a sharp lookout, the night it being dark.
Our course was steering south-southeast, for the light on Point Au Barques.

Now we're off of Point Au Barques, on Michigan's east shore,
We're booming toward the River as we'd often done before.
When opposite Port Huron light our anchor we let go,
And the sweepstakes came along and took the "Bigelow" in tow.

She took nine of us in tow, we all were fore and aft,
She towed us down to Lake St. Clair and stuck us on the flats.
We parted the "Hunter's" tow-line in giving us relief,
And the timber Schooner "Bigelow" ran into the "Maple-Leaf."

Now, the "Sweepstakes" left us outside the river light,
Lake Erie's blustering winds and stormy waves to fight.
We laid to at the Hen and Chicken, the wind it blew a gale;
We had to lay till morning, for we could not carry sail.

We made the O¹ and passed Long Point, the wind it being fresh and free,
We're bowling along the Canadian shore, Port Colborne on our lee,
Oh, what is that ahead of us, shines like a glittering star?
'Tis the light upon the "Dummy," we are nigh to Buffalo pier.

Now the "Bigelow" she's arrived at Buffalo port at last,
And under Reade's elevator, the "Bigelow" she's made fast,
And in some lager-beer saloon we'll take a social glass,
We'll all be jolly shipmates, and we'll let the bottle pass.

Each of our wars has produced its own songs, and some remain yet unprinted. Probably from the Civil War has come those for which we feel the greatest interest. On the whole, I believe the Rebel war-songs that belong properly to the class I am seeking are superior to the Yankee songs. Here are the sentiments of an unreconstructed individual:

Oh, I'm a good old rebel, that's what I am,
And for this land of freedom I don't care a damn;
I'm glad I fought agin her, I only wish we'd won,
And I don't ax any pardon for anything I've done.

I served with old Bob Lee for three years thereabout;
Got wounded in four places and starved at Point Lookout;

¹ Rondeau, called the "O" or "Eau."

I caught the rheumatism a-campin' in the snow,
But I killed a chance o' Yankees, and I wish I'd killed some mo'.

Three hundred thousand Yankees is stiff in Southern dust;
We got three hundred thousand before they conquered us;
They died of Southern fever and Southern steel and shot;
I wish there was three million instead of what we got.

I hate the constitooshin, this great republic, too;
I hate the nasty eagle and the uniform so blue;
I hate their glorious banner and all their flags and fuss;
These lyin', thevin' Yankees, I hate 'em wuss and wuss.

I hate the Yankee nation and everything they do;
I hate the Declaration of Independence, too;
I hate the glorious union, 'tis dripping with our blood;
I hate the striped banner, I fought it all I could.

I can't take up my musket and fight them now no mo',
But I'm not going to love them, and that is certain sho';
And I don't want no pardon for what I was or am;
I won't be reconstructed, and I don't care a damn.

I won't be reconstructed, I'm better now than them;
And for a carpet-bagger I don't care a damn;
For I'm off for the frontier as soon as I can go;
I'll prepare me a weapon and start for Mexico.

A fair example of the product of the soldiers of the Federal army runs, —

White folks, hold your tongues, listen to my ditty:
I'm just from Fort Monroe and bring news to the city.
The rebels they are shaking, they know they'll get a stringing;
For, since McClellan got command, he set them all to singing.

The rebels talk of Bull Run, and say they won the battle;
But the Sixty-ninth and Fire boys, they cut up them 'er cattle;
And though they knew it was a draw, they say that we were worsted;
But they'll have to beat an awful crowd before the Union's bursted.

Jeff Davis is a putty man, there's none at blowing louder;
But the soldiers must not shoot him, for 'twould be a waste of powder.
He ain't as good as another hog, for him there is no curing;
So first we'll hang him up to dry, then sell him for manuring.

Now we've got the rifle cannon, and the patent shot and shell
The bully Union volunteers will give the rebels—pison
They'll capture General Beauregard, give Floyd a hempen collar,
And take the last damn rebel, I'll bet you half a dollar.

As an example of the songs that tell the sad stories of the folk I have roughly designated as the "down-and-out class," I shall read

you a ballad I heard sung by a wandering singer plying her minstrel trade by the roadside in Fort Worth, during an annual meeting of the Texas Cattle Raisers' Association. It is the song of the girl factory-worker, and the singer told me she picked it up in Florida.

No more shall I work in the factory
To greasy up my clothes,
No more shall I work in the factory
With splinters in my toes.

Refrain.

It's pity me, my darling,
It's pity me, I say,
It's pity me, my darling,
And carry me far away.

No more shall I hear the bosses say,
"Boys, you had better daulf."
No more shall I hear those bosses say,
"Spinners, you had better clean off."

No more shall I hear the drummer wheels
A-rolling over my head;
When factory girls are hard at work
I'll be in my bed.

No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me up too soon,
No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me from my home.

No more shall I see the super come
All dressed up so fine;
For I know I'll marry a country boy
Before the year is round.

No more shall I wear the old black dress
Greasy all around;
No more shall I wear the old black bonnet
With holes all in the crown.

Refrain.

And it's pity me, my darling,
It's pity me, I say,
It's pity me, my darling,
And carry me far away.

Very few of the many work-songs that have had their origin among the men who have done the labor of putting down our great railway-lines have escaped printing in railway publications. The following song is sung along the Chesapeake and Ohio Road in Kentucky and West Virginia.

When John Henry was a little lad
A-holding of his papa's hand,
Says, "If I live until I'm twenty-one,
I'm goin' to make a steel-driving man."

As Johnny said, when he was a man
He made his words come true,
He's the best steel-driver on the C & O Road,
He belongs to the steel-driving crew.

They brought John Henry from the white house
And took him to the tunnel to drive,
He drove so hard he broke his heart,
He laid down his hammer and he died.

I hear the walking boss coming,
Coming down the line;
I thought I heard the walking boss say,
"Johnny's in that tunnel number nine."

John Henry standing on the right-hand side,
The steam-drill standing on the left,
He says, "I'll beat that steam-drill down,
Or I'll die with my hammer on my breast."

He placed his drill on the top of the rock,
The steam-drill standing by his side,
He beat the steam-drill an inch and a half,
And he laid down his hammer and he died.

Before he died he said to his boss,
"O bossman! how can it be,
The rock is so hard and the steel is so tough,
I can feel my muscle giving way?"

Johnny said just before he died,
"I hope I'll meet you all above,
You take my hammer and wrap it in gold,
And give it to the girl I love."

When the people heard of poor Johnny's death
They could not stay at their home,
They all come out on the C & O Line,
Where steel-driving Johnny used to roam.

If I die a railroad-man
Go bury me under the tie,
So I can hear old number four
As she goes rolling by.

If you won't bury me under the track,
Bury me under the sand,
With a pick and shovel under my head
And a nine-pound hammer in my hand.

I shall not read you examples of cowboy ballads, although I have discovered many new ones in the last two years, because this type of ballad is well illustrated in a collection hitherto published. I wish to refer to one interesting fact in connection with the negro "Ballet of the Boll-Weevil." This song we know to have been made by plantation negroes during the last fifteen years, because the boll-weevil immigrated from Mexico into Texas about that number of years ago. Before that time the boll-weevil had never been heard of, even by the oldest inhabitant. The negroes have made a long song about the invasion of the boll-weevil, the destruction it has wrought, and the efforts of the entomologists to subdue it. Just as they sympathize with the weaker and shrewder Brer Rabbit against his stronger opponents Brer Fox and Brer Wolf, so do the negroes in the "Ballet of the Boll-Weevil" sympathize with the puny boll-weevil against the attacks of the white man. There are perhaps one hundred stanzas to this song, and new ones turn up in every community of negroes I visit. The concluding stanza of this ballad, which is certainly the product of unlettered negroes, runs as follows: —

"If anybody axes you who wuz it writ dis song,
Tell 'em it wuz a dark-skinned nigger
Wid a pair of blue duckins on
A-lookin' fur a home,
Jes a-lookin' fur a home."

The ballad "Jesse James," which concerns itself with episodes in the life of a famous Missouri outlaw, and which certainly sprang from illiterate people (Professor Belden thinks it was written by a negro), concludes with this stanza: —

This song was made by Billy Gashade
As soon as the news did arrive;
He said there was no man with the law in his hand
Could take poor Jesse when alive.

One of my correspondents who has a ranch on the Rio Grande River sent to me a few weeks ago a ballad in Spanish which took for its theme the life of that particular ranch in some of its most dramatic aspects. My correspondent got the ballad from a Mexican goat-herd who could neither read nor write. Its final stanza runs, —

El que compuso estos versos,
No es poeta ni es trovador
Se clama Chon Zaragoza,
Su destino fue pastor.¹

¹ He who wrote these verses
Is neither poet nor troubadour;
His name is Chon Zaragaza,
His calling, a goat pastor.

Here we have a Spanish-Indian, a negro whose ancestors are recently from Africa, and an unknown unlettered person from Missouri, ending their songs with the ballad convention, so familiar to us all from classical examples, which sometimes hints at and sometimes reveals the identity of the author.

The real cowboy ballads of which the Old Chisholm Trail is a type are probably America's most distinct contribution to this form of literature. The life on the Old Chisholm Trail that led from near San Antonio, Tex., across the country to Montana, is epitomized in the verses. In its entirety it is an epic of the cattle-trail. It concerns itself with every phase of the adventurous and romantic life of the cowboy, and particularly of the typical incidents to be met in leading ten thousand Texas steers from the Rio Grande River to Montana and the Dakotas. It contains hundreds of stanzas, only very small groups of which were composed by a single person. "It was a dull day," said one of my cowboy correspondents, "when one of the boys did not add a stanza to this song." He would practise it over while he was riding alone during the day, and then submit it to the judgment of his fellows when they met around the chuck-wagon and the camp-fire after supper. The "Ballad of the Boll-Weevil" and the "Ballad of the Old Chisholm Trail," and other songs in my collection similar to these, are absolutely known to have been composed by groups of persons whose community life made their thinking similar, and present valuable corroborative evidence of the theory advanced by Professor Gummere and Professor Kittredge concerning the origin of the ballads from which came those now contained in the great Child collection.

The making of cowboy ballads is at an end. The big ranches of the West are being cut up into small farms. The nester has come, and come to stay. Gone is the buffalo, the Indian war-whoop, the free grass of the open plain; even the stinging lizard, the horned frog, the centipede, the prairie-dog, the rattlesnake, are fast disappearing. Save in some of the secluded valleys of southern New Mexico, the old-time round-up is no more; the trails to Kansas and to Montana have become grass-grown or lost in fields of waving grain; the maverick steer, the regal longhorn, has been supplanted by his unpoetic but more beefy and profitable Polled Angus, Durham, and Hereford cousins from across the seas.

The changing and romantic West of the early days lives mainly in story and in song. The last figure to disappear is the cowboy, the animating spirit of the vanishing era. He sits his horse easily as he rides through a wide valley enclosed by mountains, with his face turned steadily down the long, long road, — "the road that the sun goes down." Dauntless, reckless, without the unearthly purity of Sir Galahad, though as gentle to a pure woman as King Arthur, he is

truly a knight of the twentieth century. A vagrant puff of wind shakes a corner of the crimson handkerchief knotted loosely at his throat; the thud of his pony's feet mingling with the jingle of his spurs is borne back; and as the careless, gracious, lovable figure disappears over the divide, the breeze brings to the ears, faint and far, yet cheery still, the refrain of a cowboy song:—

Refrain.

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies;¹
It's my misfortune and none of your own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies;
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

As I was walking one morning for pleasure,
I spied a cow-puncher all riding along;
His hat was throwed back and his spurs was a jinglin',
As he approached me a-singin' this song.

Refrain.

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies;
It's my misfortune and none of your own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies;
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

Early in the spring we round up the dogies,
Mark them and brand them and bob off their tails;
Drive up our horses, load up the chuck-wagon,
Then throw them dogies up on the trail.

Refrain.

It's whooping and yelling and driving them dogies;
Oh, how I wish you would go on!
It's whooping and punching and go on little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

Refrain.

Some boys goes up the trail for pleasure,
But there's where you've got it most awfully wrong;
For you haven't any idea the trouble they give us
While we go driving them all along.

Refrain.

Oh, you'll be soup for Uncle Sam's Injuns;
"It's beef, heap beef," I hear them cry.
Git along, git along, git along little dogies,
For the Injuns'll eat you by and by.

Refrain.

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¹ Pronounced dō-gēs.